Will SEO Agencies SURVIVE? | Matthäus Michalik, Co-Founder @ Claneo | #3

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Show notes

Matthäus built one of Germany's top SEO agencies in less than 10 years, working for A-level clients like HelloFresh, Henkel, or KfW. This Thursday, he's sharing his learnings and how he navigates his 80-person agency through the GEO transformation.

While most SEO consultants are still working solo or with small teams, Matthäus co-founded Claneo with Magdalena and Martin and scaled it to 80 people.

He told me that he's currently in one of the most interesting phases of the company, because they're steering an entire organization through the biggest shift in the search ecosystem for 20 years.

This is the guy who:

- Built Claneo from zero to 80 SEO professionals in under a decade
- Won enterprise clients like HelloFresh, Henkel, KfW, WHU, and DMEXCO
- Navigated multiple Google algorithm updates with dozens of client portfolios

We'll dive deep into: -> If he fears losing the position Claneo has earned over the last decade -> How he navigates the agency and his clients through the GEO shift -> How big the impact of AI overviews and zero click is across their portfolio -> How big AI Search already is across their portfolio -> Why he is launching his own GEO conference in October

Let's connect! Niklas on LinkedIn: https://www.linkedin.com/in/niklas-buschner/ Radyant on LinkedIn: https://www.linkedin.com/company/radyant/ Matthäus on LinkedIn: https://www.linkedin.com/in/matthaeus-michalik/ Claneo on LinkedIn: https://www.linkedin.com/company/claneo/

Full conversation

[00:00:00] we will kick it off uh officially. So hi everyone for all of you joining for the first time. I just want to give some very short context about this interview series we are doing here at Radiant the Masters of Search talks. Um this is not just another podcast but an exclusive series of talks invite only where we host interesting guests from the search marketing space. Topics will range from SEO to paid search and AI search obviously. Uh we will kick off the interview today with David and uh after that go into Q&A so everyone has the chance to get the questions answered. But please mute yourself now if you haven't done it already. And if you have a question along the way just click on the dots in the right bottom corner of your screen then on Q&A and enter your question so nothing gets lost.

[00:00:51] Um in the end in the Q&A you can also unmute yourself and explain your question if you like

or we can have a little bit of a discussion. So without further ado, I'm super happy to introduce today's guest uh David Konitzknney. He spent uh a lot of time decoding AI search on LinkedIn. I wrote 100 plus hours. I think this is uh widely underestimated. I think it's probably a lot more uh so he can help us better understand how it works and how we can optimize for it. So, David, some people joining us today will probably know you, but for the rest of us, who are you and where do you work? Yes, for sure. So, my name uh David or actually David to be honest. Uh but it's always too stressful to say it. Um I'm the product owner of uh organic search at KKP. So mainly my job is nowadays to um make the sync between the operative teams and the sales team and providing our customers the best service. So looking at what do we offer, what should we offer in the future nowadays of course AI search but also far more things like what products uh suits our customers the best and basically how to be more visible.

[00:02:04] That's al also why you see me more often on LinkedIn of course. Really cool. Yeah, I have seen you on LinkedIn quite a bit lately. Um, probably also people in the audience who felt like, hey, if David goes live, if David goes live, sorry, I definitely want to join. Um, so at KKP or at Koshking Performance, um, the whole name, uh, you're focused on the finance sector, right? Uh so banks, insurancees, uh maybe you can give us a little bit also of an idea about um the focus you have in the agency just to to understand your background and understand the clients you're working with day-to-day a little bit better. Mhm. So um actually the whole journey of mine started at PK an agency also based in Berlin uh where I did the whole SEO game. So how do I or how should I do SEO in the future? Then uh I was going to raisin uh commonly known as veg fund in Germany and this is more or less just like an um financial institute where you can get uh overnight monies and so on.

[00:03:05] And there I spent five years uh at the end as head of organic search having digital PR content and SEO in my teams. And this was then also the case when I said like okay if I do something in the future I will stick to uh this sector financial institutions and insurance and yeah actually KKP was uh more or less also our um back in the days then there uh our um agency I was working with and at some point I just uh said like guys you are so nice and cool um is there a way to work with you full-time not just as your client and yeah that's how I end up at KKP And yeah, as you said, um, focus is insurance and, uh, financial institutions and so on. Um, it's actually really nice because back in the days there was always a saying if you make it in SEO for financial terms like uh, credits and so on. You really know uh that that you are great SEO. Maybe nowadays it's not it's not that thing anymore. But uh, it's a really fun area.

[00:04:06] It's uh completely different to e-commerce where you can really optimize a lot of things especially technical parts uh with the millions of URLs you will have and insurance and uh financial institution is more aboutformational structures. So how are you known as a brand? Are you connected to this topical authorities and especially like what do you write about it? So there's a ton of things that you can write and then of course AI overview and all the other LLMs came over and shredded it a bit to pieces maybe. Okay, very interesting. Let's dive deeper into that. So um last week I had Malttoantware on who was previously at Idialo and is now um simo at PKI. Uh for everybody watching this on YouTube, I will link um the video with Malta uh at the top here in this uh corner. Um but Malta has told us a little bit about the impact of AI overviews and AI search in general on consumer journeys but also on a lot of websites obviously because I think there's um at least like the trend of a lot of websites seeing traffic declines etc. So also a lot of uncertainty in the market. um from your insights obviously you you can't share uh specific client names but how big is the impact of AI overviews and I AI search already for your clients so maybe you can share some insights around that um so I I think the it's already known outside that the decline of clicks is around 20% so before overview roll out and afterwards so of course we do see way more less clicks than beforehand Um, regarding like Chetch BT, Gemini traffic and so on, it's still around maybe 1% of the whole traffic you can see in uh Google

Analytics at least there. Uh, so I wouldn't say those LMS are right now really something you need to look in. Of course, like back in the days with SEO, nobody looked at it and then actually came around the corner in Germany as an example and made it really big.

[00:06:14] Um but still it's too small maybe to invest a lot of money uh right now especially for uh banks or insurance where you really need to figure out or think about what are you actually doing you spend everything with uh the paid channels do you spend everything with out of home home campaigns or actually SEO and I I think it's not a lie that uh nobody wants to spend money on SEO and maybe nowadays it's a bit nicer for SEO teams but it's still a big issue there and so Yeah, AI overview is actually the biggest issue right now. I wouldn't say issue right now. Uh but it it has an impact especially as I said beforehand. Uh a lot of informational content is created is out there and you don't need to have it anymore or you are actually creating it. It doesn't make any any difference anymore because the clicks are uh not there anymore. As I said, 20% less clicks.

[00:07:09] But the uh but one thing that nobody's really looking at, it's not and this is also what we always tell our customers and everybody who wants to join us, who wants to work with us as a client. Um we are not simply looking at uh clicks or impressions. Um every company has KPIs like uh leads, newsletter signups, anything like this. And this should be in the future way more important than clicks or impressions because we see it with some clients. Yes, they they lost a lot of traffic, but there's no decline in SEO uh leads. So, KPIs still the same. So, I have to give it to Google when they say like your lead or your traffic has more quality. Maybe yes, because you don't really see this with the KPIs going down.

[00:07:54] But, of course, if you are always uh reporting clicks and your boss is always just looking at the clicks, it's hard to say it's still bringing some value in it. So one of the learnings already keep an eye on your business KPIs and not just the clicks maybe. Yeah, I can I can second that. So we have clients where traffic is actually in decline. We also have clients where traction uh traffic is actually still growing. So obviously we have somehow created something more future proof there. Um but we have one client for example where the traffic has I'm not quite sure let's say it has declined 30 to 40%. U but leads have actually grown or um stayed stable. So this is this is um something you wouldn't expect because usually you have always uh used clicks as a proxy for success.

[00:08:44] And if you said like I mean the exchange rate uh was was a variable like do I need 10 clicks or do I need 20 clicks for one conversion but this exchange rate uh completely changes. So we have to recalculate that and I think there's a difference. So if you are looking at domains that are already well established, uh of course you don't see such a growth anymore in clicks because let's say you have like 10,000 clicks per day, then you will have a decline of uh 2K and end up with 8 uh,000 clicks per day and that's it. But if you are still a growing domain, you will see even nowadays still a growth impact. So all all those LinkedIn posts sharing like oh it doesn't matter AI overviews uh are there but we still see a growth. Yes, of course. because you're still creating content, you're still getting some clicks that are not there beforehand.

[00:09:33] But if you reached a certain level, it's harder to get the clicks. And I think M was it actually who said last time uh we saw the peak of traffic or organic traffic last year, maybe at the beginning of 2025, and this is now the normal, but it shouldn't be we shouldn't be afraid of this because there's there's more to report than just clicks. Yeah, 100%. And I think um a key differentiation between what Malta said for the whole market in terms of peak traffic, this does not necessarily mean that you will have peak traffic as an individual domain because if your market is if you have like 1 to 2% market share, you can still I mean sounds hard maybe, but you can still eat in the market share of your competitors although the whole pie gets a little bit smaller.

[00:10:21] But if the whole pie gets smaller, you just have to take a bigger bite. Yeah, exactly. The only thing is of course uh with AI mode coming around the corner, uh what will happen if they if Google set up AI mode as a default, but this is something for the future maybe. Yeah, let let's let's um keep this question. We should come back to that. But maybe we have already um covered this a little bit. Um and I would like to get your take on Google versus LLMs for a second because um I see basically uh people telling me yeah no I don't trust the answers from Chubby it's all fluff uh whatever and then on the other hand we have hardcore JGBT users who say hey I have basic as Malta said with his uh I think South Korea trip where he forced himself to use chat GPT for two weeks straight without using Google um anymore.

[00:11:18] So um it seems to me like a lot of people talk about Google like it will be the next MySpace. Um what what's your perspective here? Um I think it's clear that Google still has the biggest market share of all those tools out there or all those engines. So it will be clearly out and I think uh it's not it's nice for Google to finally have some competition that they can take uh on and they need to evolve. So this is by far the best thing right now for all of us. Google never had to evolve because there was nobody out there. maybe Bing or so on but who cares about it at least from Google's perspective but now with uh especially CHP they need to do something you see this we have so many features and changes we didn't have this in years maybe slight changes in in the serves visual things but nobody beside us SEOs cared really about this h as I said like still um not so many people are using chbt of course as everybody's seeing this number and it's growing But we are really in a bubble here right now. If I go to some friends, maybe to my parents, they never heard about it. They would never actually use it. So it will still take some years probably until it becomes a part of society that you're also using CHPT for especially younger people. I still try to count me as a young person.

[00:12:45] Some friends of mine, they are starting to use church. When we are looking for up for something, they're not googling it. still googling also something that just happened because of Google award. Um but still uh I doubt that CHPT will by now be something where you need to focus 100%. It's more this AI search as a whole. So really thinking about what is happening outside there and uh be ready for it especially because there are a lot of online marketing teams uh in all those companies right now who have the biggest chance right now finally to sync finally to start talking to each other SEO with brand with PR with affiliate teams and so on to really create a strategy that is fulfilling and also wholesome for the whole company because that's actually what uh all those LLMs are doing they're just scraping ing and crawling the whole web. It's like a big library and there's a ton of information and everything that's out there at least written not as a out of form campaign and so on can be used as information. Doesn't matter if it's your domain, if it's a competitor domain writing about you, if those are Reddit for forums or reviews about your product.

[00:13:56] You need to keep now everything uh in line to make yourself better and more visible in those uh things. So yes, try to uh to align finally the whole marketing team. I always I'm always saying this, make this happen. Talk to each other. Try really to create a strategy. This is uh like I think Fiskin was it who said like search is everywhere. So we do this also uh funny thing about this and for Google as I said they are coming up with so many things. So ditching Google or saying Google is the next MySpace I wouldn't say so. Yeah I find this perspective um super valuable because uh I sometimes see people taking um too much of this let's say anecdotal evidence. So they have a few friends or at least we in our bubble. Uh we feel like I am using chativity a lot. So obviously I for example I'm using code a lot in my daily work. It helps me with all kinds of stuff from coding to to to brainstorming to structuring stuff to content writing. Um, but you shouldn't extrapolate from that to like the whole population because I mean there there is a reason why a lot of people were still using Internet Explorer up until it was discontinued and it's a matter of differentiating between first movers and then I don't know the exact terms like this is

all defined the first movers and then the next cohort and then basically the big mass. So uh I'm not saying that churchd is not relevant. It's super relevant and the growth is is is um crazy but we just have to keep an eye on how many users are really adapting it for which use cases etc.

[00:15:35] So you have already mentioned AI mode and I find this really interesting because it feels to me so maybe for everybody that does not have a picture in mind about AI mode, you can just quickly give us an idea about what this might look like and what AI mode will be from from Google and maybe also how how you think this will turn out. So, do you think this will be the default and the only available search option in Google in the future or is there maybe a more nuanced uh picture? Um, to be honest, I think it will become the default search function of uh Google. It's still too early of course to say it and I can't predict it. Um, but everything is clearly speaking for it. So actually maybe there's a come there's a post coming out today from certain person who is writing about this but what you can see already in AI mode is that you have Google maps included in there you have Google shopping included there so the whole journey is already covered you have uh follow-up suggestions so answer uh questions that you can ask uh that which are not connected to people also ask or the suggestions when you type in something the search bar so it's completely disconnected to this part and it's summarized really nicely. So one one thing I said earlier Google at least from my perspective always had this big issue the layout of the SERs they always looked ugly. So back in the days it was just a list. It's still a list with a lot of clickable elements and now you are just asking something and you get really nice mail more or less where it's some features where you can click on sometimes also in bold in the content certain domains that are just highlighted which are more or less in the future the new organic results. So instead of 10 just three maybe sources that are highlighted and yeah I would say this can become the default. I'm not sure how it's with Google uh regarding the energy that it costs and how well it's for our environment. Of course, you could argue well they will never change this but also Google is just a company who wants to earn money and if uh they lose customers they will do everything to keep them at the company again or with the product.

[00:17:50] The only thing that is still missing are ads. So once those ads are also in air mode, I'm pretty sure they will change it to the default mode. I mean they have already used so many pop-ups. Back in the days they always told us never use pop-ups because it's bad for your search results. Now Google is doing actually exactly the same using pop-ups to say like oh use AI mode uh click on AI mode uh use the functionality is the best thing and um actually there was though there is a saying if you are if you want to hide a dead body place it on number two of the SERs and I think in the future will it will be just the normal search. So the organic search place it in there and you will never find it again. So basically people will use AI mode. Um the only uh thing is of course as we said how do people use it in the future. So we are really trained to yeah to Google in a correct way one term two terms really precise you don't have to be so precise anymore.

[00:18:48] You can type in whatever you want and you get a really well-ritten answer. So I think what will happen is we will get educated again by Google and it will take again maybe 10 years until people really finally understand how to write something as with Google. I mean everybody knows it. If you type in something sometimes you're not finding the results that you want and you have to retype it. Especially as us SEOs I think we are handicapped anyways because we know those terms. We know the search volume behind it. We don't trust the web anyways. So we uh we can't Google uh as a normal person. But with the prompts or like with an uh with a different way of searching and writing stuff uh there will be a change and I think also Google and all those other tools will provide us in the future with a more or less search volume of prompts.

[00:19:34] This will happen. I mean this also happened with Google in the in the beginning also they didn't give you away how many people are looking for credit cards and now you have those numbers

and this will also happen with uh our questions in AI mode for sure. Very very interesting. Uh maybe one addition to the energy question because I um I saw this short YouTube short um a few days ago. It it was from 2019 but I think it has aged quite well. Um there it said that the earth gets more solar energy in 1 hour than the entire entire world uses in a year. So obviously the um energy consumption has risen significantly. But let's say then we need two hours of solar energy. Um but I think if these big tech companies um would uh max out solar capacity uh we would has we would have less um of a problem um with with the energy consumption.

[00:20:31] Um but everything that we're talking about like the AI search etc is based on um these engines. So let's say the search engine in the past Google uh or then the uh AI generative engines basically crawling the web and discovering content and discovering education and providing it in a format that is fundamentally different to what we used uh prior to November 2022 and I noticed you've been analyzing how different sites are blocking AI crawlers now through the robots txt. So robots txt basically a little file that you put on your website where you can say hey crawler I don't want you go away uh or hey crawler you can come in it's fine you can um look at my content and you mentioned that target show so everybody um who's not German in the audience it's a big public German media format um from the the main public channel uh blocks LLMs um but chat then automatically redirects to alternative sources I think you had this example with tag show and Deutsche or someone else was recommended.

[00:21:36] So what's your take on that? Should publishers be blocking AI crawlers if they feel like their intellectual property is misused or is it something where in the end uh you only help your competitors? Tricky question. Um, I also uh uh got a a couple of uh replies to this post and uh I would say I totally understand why publisher publishers are blocking it and uh nowadays those whole fake news are all over the place and uh for example chatbt you of course you can't trust that it will 100% uh give you the correct answer and we we do see this especially if you have one chat and you type in one uh question after the others and one action point after the others at some point is not giving you the correct answers anymore. So you can convince this 1 + 1 will be five and not two at some point. This is just this uh this uh thing called loss and conversation that at some point the thei doesn't know anymore what they should do.

[00:22:42] So with this in mind, yeah, 100% maybe not don't share this or don't let or block actual DIS uh in um to basically protect humanity in a certain case because uh outside imagine you are just looking for the current news and there is something written about the world war and you're panicking and it's just the AI uh rewriting something completely wrong because it was a joke in the content but it didn't get a joke at some point. So this could of course happen. Um, do I recommend to do this for the uh for the eternity for all for all the time? No, because certain players are not doing this. As you said, Dodge for example, actually they try to do this and I will say this in in a sentence, but if you're not doing this, you will be still there. So meaning you are just taking you your piece out of this whole uh game and at some point you will be not visible more or less like you would say like I put all my landing pages on no index so it will be not indexed and not visible in the search anymore because I don't trust Google. Yeah, you can do this but then you are not there anymore and people will not see you and then you are out of the game. It's more this thing of like challenging also those LMS and all those tools like what should we do? So what is the new world? Cloudfire for example said okay you can crawl but you need to pay for it a clever way because all those publishers are of course losing money.

[00:24:05] I mean if you if I can use key to summarize the news why should I go in a certain domain anymore and check the news there. I can use judging it. Um so yeah the publishers especially publishers need to rethink this whole game but I think with big company Cloudfare in the background they can uh can do this with the robust CXD and uh using it. The one uh difference here is a lot of

domains that I checked are not using all or not blocking all the chat bots. So and this is I think Kevin Ending said it uh a few days ago that we still don't know how many bots are out there. So what you need to do is either have a list that you need to update every week, every every month. You need to check your log files which bot is now there. Uh you need to trust Cloudfare that Cloudfare is showing you all the bots that they can find that you can block. Uh but they usually um so all the domains that I checked just blocked GPT. GPT is just one of I think four or five bots that OpenAI is using and there was only one domain who was actually blocking all of them and it worked and if you just miss one then of course you can be crawled but the difference here is CHPT is not crawling always your domain. So um it's crawling the domain if for example it will just uh fill up their training data and this is for news for especially for news it's not relevant because every day every hour every minute there's new news out out there so of course it will be not crawled uh and what actually doing is crawling of course the ser or maybe Google so if we are talking about we are still not uh we don't still not know if this is now true with Google crawling but what it's actually doing is just true crawling the serves And here's this game. If you are in the SERs, CHBT can crawl you. It's just taking the snippets. So, uh, one or two sentence out of the title and description. That's it. They don't need to crawl your whole domain actually. So, you you're still somehow crawled at the end. Um, so yeah, blocking uh blocking all those elements maybe is a solution. I wouldn't recommend it uh for the future.

[00:26:14] For now, maybe. But it's always the same thing. Do you really are you really willing to take yourself out of the game? In the beginning of the whole AI topic, there were big companies also in Germany who said we will not be we don't want to be crawled so we are blocking everything. I wouldn't do this. If you do this then you're just taking yourself as I said out of the game and this is not wise. You will lose at the end because this is now not something new and shiny that is leaving again. This is the new reality we are in and we need to understand this. Mhm. very interesting. You have already mentioned a topic that I think is is is very relevant. So for example, asking uh chat GPT for the news um because there are fundamentally different use cases um where you can use uh an AI uh uh search or like an AI chatbot. So one would be um explain uh solar energy or photovotex to me like I'm a 5-year-old like um things that can be answered um from from the foundational knowledge and then other stuff.

[00:27:21] So um maybe everybody in the audience has already noticed that sometimes Chad or Claude or Gemini answer stuff just based on their knowledge and sometimes they perform a live search. So maybe you can because I know that you have spent quite some time on that. Maybe you can uh as a first help us understand a little bit more of the differences. When does an AI chatbot perform a live search and when does it answer something based on its foundational knowledge? Mhm. Um to understand this uh you need to understand that actually I think November last year was the first time when CHBT also mentioned some sources. So all of a sudden you saw what or where uh JGPT was for example crawling or getting the information.

[00:28:07] This was also not the thing back then because it was still grains on those fun uh fundamental information. So basically what is the capital city of Germany this is something this this will not change so often. You don't need to crawl thousands of websites and Wikipedia every day to get this information. This is this is just a fact. the stays with it especially uh when you're looking for topics like news things uh 2025 back then you always had the issue so when you are uh one of the people who used it in the beginning and it was always telling you like yeah I don't have the information because I have information from 2023 or till 2023 and it was the end of 2024 for example when you requested something this now changed completely with web search so whenever you are asking something and the engine and background uh background doesn't get the information. It will just start a web search and then it's actually kind of interesting what it's actually doing because what is happening? So I type in

best product let's say best toothbrush on the market and where can I buy it and all of a sudden you see on the left corner web search is activated and I'm looking for something but where what I know that it's using an engine let's say Bing instead of Google because I still believe it's Bing.

[00:29:25] Um when we are talking about open NI here um what is it typing in uh is it actually typing in something where does it get the information and how can I actually believe that ch is doing this stuff or is it just like something written and actually it's still taking the information from the back end. So basically when it's um how it starts to do a web search is really if you want to get news information right now stuff for example um or like comparisons and so on where it gets it needs to get more and more information and if you're just some let's say you want to crack a code you are just using an HTML and say could you please read uh the fundamental thing out of this HTML of course there's no web search because the code knows how what to do and doesn't need to do this but if I'm asking like what happened yesterday to David Beckham.

[00:30:16] Probably there will be a web search in the background because the the engine doesn't know what daily the daily life of David Beckham looks like. Very interesting. I also um um heard this from Malta uh last week. I think it makes sense that we have to understand that uh for the LLM or for like the AI chatbot provider, a web search uh takes uh more resources. So they also it increases the latency. So it in simple words it takes longer to provide the answer. So um the AI chatbot basically has a bias towards answering based on the foundational knowledge and only based on certain criteria you have outlined some um it performs a web search. Now I I can imagine that a lot of people understand this principle but they have a hard time understanding and really picturing in their mind how does the LLM search? So uh does it just enter one query on on Bing or on Google or uh does it like like how does this work?

[00:31:24] How how is an LLM or an AI chatbot actually searching and is it possible for us to see this? It is actually so um in the last couple of weeks there uh so everything is changing right now. Everybody's the wild wild west out there. Everybody's finding something. And I think Jerome uh as his name he found he was the first person who found a way to see when chach for example is doing a web search what keywords or queries it is using where to find it and also created a bookmark out of this where you can actually always check okay which queries I used to um in the background again here um we are not 100% sure if this is really the thing. So this is like this whole fan out. I'm asking a question and several queries in the back end are fired to get my answers. Basically all the uh URLs it can find. So at the end uh somebody who's doing for you a live research on the web here at Bing and then just handing you over all the keywords all the URLs that it could find.

[00:32:29] So basically like an SEO training every agency have please do a keyword research for me and send me all the 10 top 10 uh domains. Um so this is actually happening. You can see this in the code and I can show it uh in a few minutes actually how to do this if you want. Uh and uh you can also see this with perplexity and with Gemini. So all three of them you can see when a web search is activated that in the background there are queries fired and out of those uh results URLs are taken and they are used to create your answer. Yeah. Very cool. I think it would be super interesting to dive into this. So, uh maybe if you mind um you you could just share your screen and um I think you have actually taken this bookmark and uh even developed it a little bit further so that you also have some additional features.

[00:33:24] Uh uh let's not spoil this uh already. So let let's let's keep it. Uh but yeah, let's dive right in. Sure. I will share my screen. And of course I prepared something because you're never sure if this is then uh working or if my connection is bad at the moment. So I try to do something in English for the audience. Uh I apologize. My apology actually didn't work out because whenever I type in something

nowadays in Chuch because it's so used to me writing German of course uh it still gives me the answer in uh in German. So that's why I said okay I stay with the whole germ sentence here. So what I basically did and I will um basically should say it for you is I asked the church what is the best toothbrush and where can I actually buy it and then I get a typical result that you will also get in English actually with some uh product elements in the middle. So this is also a new feature since a couple of weeks now that you get those product elements when I click on it I will be uh sending out u to the domain and you get all the information here and now there is a way if you open the um dev tools you can uh on the top here I hope it's is big enough for everybody click on network and when you have the network open you just need to look up for your ID in the chat and search for this ID chat here in the names and once you find it I opened it already you have basically the whole code how open AI or chat in this case is uh or what is doing in the background to give you all the answers that you need and to go a bit through this I will show you here right now uh what is happening so first of all whenever you get do you do something in shubt and this is for all the L&Ms um it checks what you provided as information.

[00:35:21] So let's say I said my name is and you have this actually here my name is David my role is product owner organic search um just that I want to be specific this term and then I said please uh be always well educated professional don't be polite uh I actually changed the signal today also a bit and now I get like a really formal hello David how's your day and then at the end always sincerely chat GPT which is kind funny. Um, so this is also changing the whole uh way chd is working or talking to you which is a different uh uh conversation here right now. Uh but you see here my my question I ask in the code and now it gets a bit more interesting because whenever I put something in a search is activated and this is not a search term it's just telling uh right now this is a search you need to do something with this and it actually breaks down the whole part if you if I scroll down and I don't want to spot it here this is better uh it breaks on the search for you. So, what you see here right now is best elective toothbrush 2025 reviews and best manual toothbrush reviews 2025. This is actually right now in English. I typed it in in German, but JBT is still doing the research in English for me. Up until today, I can't give you the clear number when it's German, when it's English.

[00:36:52] It's always changes all on the top. I said uh I had the issue to replicate this uh in English but still the queries are in English here right now and also the sources to be honest if I scroll down because this is the juicy part here you see here all the sources it was taken out of those queries and as you see it's in English so what the engine is actually doing I'm as a German typing in something in German based in Germany my VPN is in German and still it's doing the research for me in English based on English domains and basically just translating everything in the background for me. So you can also say now if you want to uh optimize for it let's say everybody now in the audience saying great I use this now I use those keywords and I will optimize and I will be shown there it might be also that you need to translate now all your URLs in English so that it also pop up pops up as an English result in the in the SERs. I wouldn't recommend this.

[00:37:49] I mean there's a lot of resources you should invest into this. Not sure if this is really the case where you or how you can optimize this especially if we you are in the e-commerce. So transaction cues are also important for you because those what I this is what what I showed and I think uh I can spoil it now what I also created or what I found those are justformational queries. Of course there are information because you're looking for reviews but there are also product queries in it. And that's why I scrolled down a bit faster here. You saw actually right now product query. So what is happening in the background is the engine is changing between informationational queries and product queries.

[00:38:31] The product queries here are electric toothbrush, manual toothbrush. This doesn't show up here in this feature anymore in this code here anymore. And there's also a feature from surfer uh where you can I don't click on this right now because I don't want to uh get any issues here right now but it also

just shows you those um those queries thoseformational queries. So there are also product queries and again here you could optimize for those product queries. Do I recommend this? I don't know. There is no case right now where it shows that it makes sense to optimize for this especially when I type this request again I get different queries right now. So the next time it could be uh just best electric toothbrush 2025 reviews and not uh the manual toothbrush anymore.

[00:39:16] So this is also always changing. It's basically like somebody or if you have a whole group of pe of people and every day somebody else is uh checking something for you and the the queries are different. So what I did uh knowing this part I used the template everybody is by now familiar. So whenever you see something like this, it's not an original bookmark anymore. There is Jerome and Ziggy, they created uh in the beginning this bookmark. You will always uh see this by this nice design here. And whenever you see this, make sure to say uh thank you to Jerome Z who created it because everybody is you using this template. But what I was doing is more or less um adding a certain parts into this. In the beginning you see summary and inner dialogue. This is always also in the code visible. So the summary is basically shbt um telling himself again uh you need to produce a best list of all the toothbrushes out there. So this is always like taking again what you asked and summarizing it again and then you have this inner dialogue and this is really interesting because there you see like a human being who would now think okay what should I do and this is exactly what is writing to us.

[00:40:30] So you can learn so much things out of this. I think nobody's actually doing this right now. Would be an interesting topic. So it's basically saying okay now I need to figure out what are the best toothbrushes where can I buy it? I need to check for products uh which option I have there. uh at the end I will also look at some reviews and nice part here uh I will add a uh a carousel uh at the at the end for the product so that the person who's looking up for something and you saw this earlier this I mean this part here I will add this as well um to the answer so the user gets all the best information and with uh this bookmark right now as I said you have the search queries you have the product queries and you have search history results Those are actually really interesting because just for product query so so far could find it what is happening in the background is that you get all those reviews and all the information and shrimpt is using the product names as you can see here let's say um yeah here this oral bake click uh hansan burster chrome number number and chbpt is then creating again a request to chatbt in this code as you can here and it by default it activates actually a web search and I can show you now right now what is happening. You see here it's basically asking himself again um this is the product what can I find if I activate a web search and then all of a sudden he's typing in everything.

[00:42:08] So where to buy it? What is the price? Uh is there a review? some stars like four out of five stars and so on. Interesting enough uh those information so those sources you will be seeing here right now are not in the original code. So basically uh this is also what I uh called a hidden layer of uh product searches. Uh this is really this hidden layer. If you really want to understand how your product or how any product is search, you need to go through this whole journey to see okay what is the second request uh from CHP through CHPT and uh what are informations are there and you can actually optimize then again for stuff you can find here but again here you see Amazon eBay target so if you're not Amazon eBay or Target probably no chance to be in here um and you can find this all with this plugin um I think you will share it later again uh I called the judge product intent parser I'm not the best person by uh naming this stuff uh but you find here everything how it works and what you need to do at the end is just take this this code here just copy it uh this uh easy going you then create a bookmark so right click and adding some stuff we can't see because I think you've just shared the window instead of the whole whole screen.

[00:43:36] Um maybe just just switch it a little bit because otherwise I would have said that everybody is probably blown away by this and the insights and like the options just to play around with it but we have

to ensure that people know how to install this to actually benefit from it. Now you can see it right? Yeah, I think maybe it's a little bit small, but for everybody that feels like this is too small for you currently to see, no worries. Um, we will have a recording. Um, I will so either you already subscribed to this channel on YouTube. If not, um, just write me on LinkedIn. I will send it over to you and then you can basically like zoom in and probably David is also um very helpful in installing it with you if you don't um if you don't have the technical capabilities. Uh but yeah just please still show it even though it's small of course.

[00:44:30] So for everybody looking watching now the recording stop start again uh right click. So you copy paste the code here, right click on uh your bar here. So basically anything that you have here, right click, add here in German but add a new page. It's written in English here and then this funny stuff is popping up. What you're just doing is what you copy paste it adding it here and then you place a name you save everything and this will be your bookmarker and then whenever you trigger basically a web search um request so like this part here you will always figure this out because a web search symbol is on the top when it's activating and you see some sources you basically just need to click on the bookmark that and of course nothing's oh something is Great.

[00:45:24] Uh, and as you see the bookmark is starting is of course the same as we saw here. And with this bookmark you get then your sales queries, your product queries and those hidden search uh search hint URLs that give you deep understanding of the next level of products. So yeah, try it out if it's too fast and if you couldn't follow up the recording, ping me on LinkedIn. I can show it to you again. But it's actually really simple and um actually it's it's always working this site. Maybe Nicholas we figured out yesterday maybe a certain thing that if you have a paid account so actually I don't have a paid account but if you have a paid account with Chribut it's probably not working. So we figured out yesterday actually when we had a nice call that somehow in your paid account uh paid account there are no queries in the code. We did it several times.

[00:46:15] We tried to figure out several topics and so on, but there was never a search query activated. Even though you could see web search activated and you could see the sources, but there were no queries. It's also an interesting topic to analyze in the future. Why actually? So maybe because you are paying there's more information uh from OpenAI in the background and um if you're not paying you get the simple web search. So uh second level users so to say and the first level users get the juicy part. I have no idea. I can't explain why this is the case and maybe it was just yesterday and today it's working again. Could be also the case. Cool. Yeah. So David this was super interesting. I think um this is also um very much of like an indepth view into how I think you put this nicely with the layer u analogy.

[00:47:07] So basically if you look at so if you think about yourself searching on Google for something maybe now or in the past and if you then compare it to this where you have this um like query fan also basically uh all sorts of different queries that are searched and then you have a synthesis of these different um types of information etc. Um although I find for example um from a user perspective uh it doesn't make any sense to me that it's searching US uh links if you're obviously a user in Germany u because this like from a perspective of I want to provide the best user experience I can't provide the best user experience if I'm citing a New York Post article about some toothbrushes because in the US you might have completely different models and certifications and whatever um although Obviously people are also uh brushing their teeth there.

[00:48:03] Um but like from your perspective um who who spends a lot of time on that what would you recommend people um to to do with this? So do you just think like it's playing around understanding it experimenting just like being in this discovery like that we are all in? um or like what what what would you what would you um recommend to do? Um I would totally recommend to uh use those findings that

are shared and like especially this book markets doesn't mean my but also different ones to get an understanding of what the are doing in the background because something is happening there and you shouldn't block this information or say like well uh I'm not interested in this. It gives you a different again additional layer to what is happening there. If you can directly use this to optimize something as we said English queries hardly to optimize if you have a completely German um domain uh but at least you get the topical uh topical cluster so to say.

[00:49:04] So in SEO what you are always doing is if you have a topic what you're checking is next level queries. So let's say credit cards um is uh what is a credit card? Is this the same cluster? Usually what you did back in the days was always like use in cognitive mode even though it's uh hard to do sometimes but use it in cognitive mode type in two uh different queries and check the results. Are the query uh are the domains or the URLs in the SERs the same for both the queries okay probably the same cluster are they completely different probably Google or Bing doesn't matter is seeing different clusters here and basically tells you you need two kind of landing pages to answer those two uh queries and this is what is also now happening just additional queries and doesn't mean right now that um what we see is now this fan out stuff where you have one big cluster Because when I analyze those key results for example, two things were pretty interesting. One, the search uh volume behind this is usually 0, 10 or 20. So nobody is looking for stuff like this apparently. And when I check the URLs and the SERs, they're sometimes completely different. So what is happening here is really how everybody is claiming what is happening. You have an agent in the background who's doing several queries for you.

[00:50:25] So you are not just like now stick uh or stuck with one result. You write write something down. You get one uh reply of the domains. You get several layers and doesn't mean that this this is not a perfect cluster at the end and you need to optimize one page for all those keywords. Can still be that you need to create several pages to fulfill the whole journey. But those are relevant terms for you and maybe not those that you saw right now because as I said do this several times. So I'm doing actually um right now with um a current news test where I check what queries are uh um shown in the back end and usually yeah current news is still in English for um still the term that is used sometimes in German actually and then on the second and third position you have sometimes the month sometimes the year um but in this way when you're doing something like this of course a lot of investment and if there's no tool outside what what is doing this and you have better things to do I wouldn't recommend to do this uh but you can at least see what queries are always used what queries are just sometimes used and then you get one step into this okay what should I do now what should I really optimize for uh but please please please don't go just wildly into this right now and optimize for certain queries and then half year later you come around the corner and tell me David uh this was great that you said this because I did everything and now I'm not on the index anymore and Google is kicking me out. Um, uh, the person who already, um, wrote a question in the Q&A, thanks so much. We will come to that in a minute. I just want to, uh, add one more point to the to the great explanation you did. I think, um, something that was quite interesting um, for the example you showed is, uh, you basically asked for uh, the best uh, toothbrush and where to get it.

[00:52:22] And um the two queries that were um used for theformational uh search were uh reviews. So and this is this this just one example but to understand how the AI is basically uh uncovering the intent you have uh behind a certain prompt you did. So obviously the AI um thinks so to say in quotes that uh if you're looking for the best it's a good idea to look for reviews to compile user feedback and then basically synthesize this into a good response and if you do this like maybe if you're in e-commerce but also if you're not in e-commerce but if you are um in a service business etc um I would recommend to to try to understand what users might be prompting So you can either ask your users. So I think some key takeaways uh if you implement self-reported attribution in your form so asking users hey how did you

how did you find us or how do you know us and if they are if the users are telling chibitt etc.

[00:53:28] Go ask these specific users what they did. I know it's a little bit messy but as we say in startup space uh to scale do things that don't scale. So because it's it's it's it's important to uncover this. Then secondly, if you check your traffic that you get from LLMs to to your page, so with J4 for example or whatever tool and if you take these URLs and just put it into the search console and then look for longer queries. I mean this is Google but still you get an idea of how users are asking stuff and how they are now directed from Google to your page. But this gives you at least another hint on what users might be prompting. And then if you see a web search being activated, then use a bookmark like the one from David or from Jerome or from whoever and try to understand what the AI thinks about the intent of your prompt.

[00:54:24] And then I think you're already like if you do all this, you're already like in in a in the good percentile of people that try to uh get ahead of the curve. And one additional part is talk to your marketing team because who's writing reviews about you. You're not the one who's writing reviews about you. There are there are other pages or domains who are writing reviews about you. So get in touch with those pages. Maybe you have affiliate contracts with them and so on and so on. So really figure out who is uh out there who's writing about your company your product your service and try if you are not well uh uh or not great rated out there try to work on your reputation I mean you could have a best product and you are a great company but somehow people don't like you and your reputation is bad this is now a signal this is also shown in uh all those AIS uh and then at the end best review will be your product is bad and this will be also not recommended So marketing teams out there work together. Yeah, it's a very good advice. I think also very fundamental advice. Um, thanks so much David. We will now move over to uh Q&A. I think that this session was again really packed with insights. Super cool. Um, we already have the first question and um I think uh you will like this question uh because we had a similar question also last week.

[00:55:49] Um so the question is what is your opinion on LLMs txt files? Should should they be implemented? Please also explain David why we are laughing. Um so nobody is just thinking weird weird people. Um should they be implemented or are they overrated? Um, so best part would be to watch the first part of master of search where Martha uh was giving an answer to this and I couldn't give a better answer and we are just laughing because this is now coming up so often and I actually said that Mart gave the best answer the last time. I just tried to u um yeah give an example again here but really really uh take a look at the first session here right now. So uh L&M txts are uh SEO also and the whole bubble outside they understood completely incorrect what this thing is doing. This is not a new robots txt that you are using to that AIS will now pass all your landing pages and use this as information.

[00:56:53] This is not a thing. This is not working and this is really really really highly recommended from me from Ma from everybody out there. Don't do this. This is this is not really helping. This is really just for search uh for those agents in the background. It could be really smart if you have certain paths that you want to prioritize here. Again, look at what Malta said. He I mean he is really an expert in this. He can give you a great answer to this point. But don't create those as the new robots txt and believe that because you created a ticket in in your company and the IT team did this that you can now report that you are more visible in Cheshure BT or Gemini. this is not working. This is not the thing why it was created and this whole different level behind this. Yeah, I think this is a really good answer. Thanks so much for that. I will just I just want to give the audience a little example because there's actually so I can actually recommend googling that topic if you have the question.

[00:57:49] Um, so this is actually the llmstxt.org or and here you can see an example of a file and I see a lot of people out there actually recommending that you put like your whole blog post into an LLM txt or

something that does not make sense. What you can see here is it's it's an example stripped down. Um but it basically gives a little bit of a context about this particular project or this website. So it's a Python library which brings together Starlet UV whatever I don't know this um it's hard to technical for me. Um but then you have important notes like although parts of its API are inspired by whatever is competitive. Then some docs. So something like um a brief and markdown for the features. Uh then a brief description of some attributes um an application and um user documentation. And um this is something that makes sense and Malta also set this. So you can basically give a little bit of an indication to an LLM on how to use your website, maybe how to access your API or whatever.

[00:58:54] But this is this is probably more something like for the future of the agentic web. Uh and it's not something that SEOs should try to uh exploit as a new uh GEO tactic. Um and yeah, so clear recommendation uh from David uh from Malta and from me uh don't waste time on this unless you are in this probably 1% of websites that actually uh uh benefits from this in terms of API docs and etc. Yeah. Cool. So then another question I got um beforehand from from LinkedIn. I think we somehow strived this a little bit but I still feel like it's it's super relevant. Um, somebody said, "How do you come up with ideas for prompts to monitor or check? I'm still having a hard time making the switch from keywords to prompts.

[00:59:50] " Me as well to be honest. So, um, there are certain ways nowadays uh that where you can get at least a hint of this. So, what I like to use is um the feature from Cyrix. They have a feature. It's still I think out there in the beta version where you can actually look at every domain or at every topic you want and then it gives you a suggestion of certain prompts. 1:00:14) So prompts that are used in church in Gemini and in deepseat. This is the only information or the the only uh resources that I could recommend right now where you can see this stuff. Uh but still there is no tool right now that can uh get all this stuff uh or all this information. So my setup usually looks like this that I have cyrix that I look at this prompts I know that this might be true that doesn't mean need to be true you don't see there any search volume so please if you are out there and you're asking your SEO team can you get me the search (1:00:45) volume for a certain prompt this is not the case we don't have this value we don't know what the search volume volume is there I use those prompts I use then uh tools like PKI for example I put those uh prompts in there and then at the end I see the results and this is really how I check sometimes okay is this prompt working is a client or sometimes even myself uh uh out there as a source if yes how can I optimize it or actually if no how can I optimize it so this is a way you can do this um I think it's still like too early to uh to dig (1:01:20) into this uh uh topic because there are no tools for providing the weird information so come up with your own uh prompts what I could also suggest is use GSC see what your people are actually typing in in Google and what can you see there and use those phrases maybe also the longer phrases and put them into church or Gemini to see what the outcome is. (1:01:42) So what is the best product in XY Z or how can I do XY Z? This is sometimes also something in your GSC uh files in there. Use it, check it and this could be also be a valuable prompt. As I said in the beginning, people are still or get still educated. People are not prompting as we think like highly educated several sentences best toothbrush. (1:02:04) This is also something people can put in and see what is happening out there. So don't try to uh get too uh tricky or too clever in this. Stay calm and try to help in whatever you want. Yeah, I think also very good answer. I think also um Malta said uh last week he um had a sneak peek at a data set of actual prompts and um I think one of the one of the most used prompts. (1:02:33) So I hope I get this right but was just iPhone. So people were just putting an iPhone in chat GBT. And this is something so it's still to be determined if people are really uh like large scale entering these potentially 26word prompts and phrases in there and also um which intent stands behind it because there was a cool study of profound about the intent from 50 million plus JGBT prompts and a big a big part of these prompts are generative. (1:03:12) So meaning, hey, please help me create this and this stuff. So if I if I think about my average prompt, it's probably way longer than 26

words because I always have a context dump in there. So I probably have like from a professional perspective, you know, if you're a person working with it. Um it's it's completely different to people doing product discovery, service discovery, uh trying to understand if uh which places to visit when they do their weekend trip to Paris. (1:03:40) So they might just put in uh I want to go to Paris this weekend, what should I do? Uh like this might not be very much different to to Google. Yeah, exactly. Malta Malta used it for his vacation as he said the last time. But how many people like Malta are really doing this to use HBT as a search engine for everything? I doubt that there are so many people right now at least this will come for sure but as you said uh I also just use it I put in some content please summarize it again or rewrite something. That's how I use TGPT. There (1:04:13) is no product in behind. There is no search like what is the best toothbrush right now. Those are just examples that I use and for clients of course we are looking into this but again here if I'm looking at the older generation who are usually really the people uh many companies are targeting because they have money they want to invest something they are probably uh not using chip so often don't want to blame anybody there or say like well old people are not using this but they are just used to Google why should I change now my (1:04:42) behavior just just because church is out there it does make sense good good Um, another question we have is, are frequently asked questions, the so-called FAQs, more important than ever now for AI overviews? Wouldn't say so. So, I couldn't find anything that is now giving me a hint that this is more often used. (1:05:09) I mean, you should always use it. uh it's always something you do in uh SEO to use those information to figure out what are people frequently looking at or using but those informations are not used in any AI I could see at least I couldn't see this in the code doesn't mean it's not working for example in AI mode you see also at the end now certain um questions but as I said those have nothing to do with uh frequently asked questions or anything else they are completely different mhm Mhm. Very very interesting. Um you (1:05:43) also um maybe one question for me. Um jumping in here, you made this interesting post about something called the F element. I don't know how to pronounce it. It's basically spelled F E F O L S R C H uh in in Google AI overviews. Um can you quickly enlighten us what this is about? Um so basically what I found people claim uh that it means follow-up search or something like this. (1:06:18) Uh this is how AI overviews are structured in the back end. So you see responses, answers, sources. What you don't see is actually queries that I used. So this fenot uh thing I couldn't figure out how it works for AI overview. But you see basically everything else. The whole scallet is there. (1:06:37) how the from where the responses are coming, which sources are used and you see also uh what should happen if actually um the fallback version so to say. So you sometimes have this you type in sometime some things and then on the top you see AI overview couldn't be generated because of an issue. This is also rewritten the code to make sure uh that always AI overviews are displayed which is then a hint for us that Google is actually really looking into uh having AI overviews everywhere because it's really written in the code as a fallback version. Please write this if (1:07:10) you couldn't generate something but in short yeah it shows you very a lot of different source codes and uh features. I wrote everything about this on LinkedIn in the post. Just check it out. Uh I'm not an expert so I can't tell you what it really means. I'm just a person who's looking for stuff, writing it uh on LinkedIn and hoping that the smart person out there is explaining to me what I found actually. (1:07:34) Yeah, but I think it's the right spirit, right? This is exactly the time to do this and to just um uh go with it along the way. Um now maybe to wrap it up, if if you guys in the audience still have a question, please just put it in the Q&A. Otherwise, I still have one and I think it's quite an obvious one from from LinkedIn. (1:07:54) I got which is basically which advice do you give your clients on how to optimize for AI search? Um, everybody wants to know this. Yeah. And I think nobody has really the correct answer here right now. My advice is still stay calm. Do the stuff that you always did. So SEO is not dying. Yeah, maybe it will be different in the future, but if you still lack traffic, so organic traffic, start with organic traffic. (1:08:24) Start to build up something before looking up into AI search. And if you're really interested in AI search and you say, yeah, you reach your peak. Then, as I said, and I would

always recommend this, sit down with your whole marketing team, use us for example as an agency to support you in this, but really figure out what uh your strategy is. (1:08:44) It's not a uh one thing that one team member or one uh employee is taking a a look at. It's it's a different strategy right now. So every marketing uh member, every every piece of marketing that you have out there needs to have a story line, needs to be connected to each other. So finally my uh my advice would be go back uh check what your um company values are what you are doing out there check your reviews and rethink how your marketing is working right now if you're just putting everything into PBC great you are spending a lot of money and you get what (1:09:16) you want yeah for sure but you're still not visible out there you have no reviews nothing so make it a holistic part that marketing is out there everywhere and then then the side effect will be you're visible in AI I search you don't need to focus on AI search so dramatically right now it will be an automatic stuff side effect as I said just do marketing right interesting I think it probably also comes down to just having the right mindset right not seeing this as a threat and uh trying to uh work against it but rather as you are doing it for (1:09:54) example you're a great example I think uh trying to embrace it trying to understand it trying to dig through it. Also trying to figure out the stuff that might at first seem uh complicated and uh yeah where you are presented with JSON files etc and you have to dig through it. Um but also there I I can help you to to better understand this and I can pro I can imagine uh Jerome also um probably maybe use something like Claude or an assistant to create the bookmarklet and it's great. (1:10:27) It's basically the only limitation you have is your imagination now. So I think maybe we wrap this up. So we've already um uh we are already 15 minutes 15 minutes past. David, thanks so much for taking the time. I think this was a really insightful session. Um we will of course share the recording uh uploaded on YouTube. (1:10:51) We will uh put in your uh product intent para uh in in in the description. We'll share it on LinkedIn. And to everybody in the audience, thanks so much for joining. I hope you had a great um and interesting session and hope to see you uh next time. And um yeah, other than that, all the best and uh yeah, have a great day. Have a nice day. (1:11:17) Thanks so much. Bye-bye.